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The Army National Guard and Conservation of Combat Power

JOHN R. BRINKERHOFF

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Contrary to the prevailing conventional wisdom, the United States Army does not have an excess of land combat power. Credible missions can be assigned to each of the 73 combat brigades (18 divisions and 19 separate brigades) of the Total Army within the framework of the current national security strategy. Optimists contend that the strategy can be accomplished with only 32 active brigades (ten divisions and two cavalry regiments).[1] Pessimists say that it would be prudent to provide enough combat power to be certain of winning each major regional conflict and also perform other missions, such as backfilling NATO, conducting peace operations and humanitarian assistance, and providing a general reserve against uncertainty. In war, pessimists are usually right.

The conventional wisdom is that some or all of the National Guard combat forces should be eliminated. Army leaders and defense intellectuals alike contend that the National Guard divisions are not needed for the national military strategy. The Commission on Roles and Missions advocated eliminating the National Guard divisions because they would not be ready until after the next war is over. The staff of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy believes that the National Guard divisions are excess. The General Accounting Office says the National Guard divisions are not needed. The Army says that National Guard divisions would take a year to prepare for combat after mobilization and might not be able to fight well in modern combat even then. The Army wants to convert at least four National Guard divisions into additional support units for its own ten active divisions. Even the National Guard Bureau and the Adjutant Generals Association have agreed to the conversion of some National Guard divisions into support units. National Guard divisions have few friends today.

The view of the 15 National Guard Enhanced Brigades (E-Brigades) is less definitive. There is no great sentiment to eliminate them, but neither is there any great enthusiasm for actually using them. E-Brigades are separate (non-divisional) combat brigades with high priority for resources. During the Cold War, the Army National Guard's separate brigades were assigned theater defense and follow-on missions, including possibly acting as cadres to form new divisions. Post-Cold War force reductions left the Army National Guard with 17 separate brigades. The Bottom-Up Review (BUR) placed 15 of them in the deployment queue ahead of the National Guard divisions because the brigades could be ready to fight in 90 days, while according to the Army a division would take a full year. Because they are blessed by the BUR, the E-Brigades are supported by the Commission on Roles and Missions, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff, but they have been left without definite wartime missions. The E-Brigades are not scheduled to arrive at a major regional contingency (MRC) in time to help because our plan is to win decisive victories in a very short period of time. The Army tends to ignore the E-Brigades in its planning but has been developing strategies to train and ready them for war in the prescribed 90 days. The best the Army has been able to do for E-Brigades is to connect ten of them loosely to each of its active divisions in a mentorship mode, but without real operational missions and with no intention of using these brigades in a future war.

The land combat force structure to be retained into the 21st century should be determined by the prospective threat instead of past programs. The current Army force structure consists of 73 combat brigades (32 active and 41 National Guard). This is a 34 percent reduction in the Cold War force structure, which had at its high point in 1987 a total of 111 combat brigades (56 active, three Army Reserve, and 52 National Guard). However, measuring the validity of the current force structure by reference to Cold War levels is inappropriate because it is quite likely that the Army never did have enough land combat power during the Cold War to defeat the Warsaw Pact without resorting to nuclear weapons.[2]

This article states the case for the conservation of Army combat power by retaining the eight National Guard divisions and giving them and the 17 National Guard separate combat brigades meaningful assignments in the national security

strategy. One premise of the article is that it is less expensive in the long run to retain low-cost combat power than to reconstitute it if the conventional wisdom is wrong. If the National Guard divisions are eliminated, the combat power they can provide is gone forever. Another premise of the article is that the strategy is the structure. It is easy to state goals, missions, and methods, but real military capability is defined by units and resources. We can apply only the combat power that we form and fund. The method proposed in this article is to allocate all of the 73 existing combat brigades of the Army to one of four major missions:

- a major regional contingency in Southwest Asia
- a major regional contingency in Northeast Asia
- minor contingencies, peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and operations in aid of civil authorities
- a general reserve

The first two missions are sanctioned by the National Security Strategy and the Bottom-Up Review and are the basic force-sizing criteria for all the military services. The two major regional contingencies listed above are the most likely conflicts and are used for planning and force sizing, but it is possible that an MRC could occur in another theater. The two MRCs are postulated to occur at about the same time, without speculation about which would occur first. This means that forces for Southwest Asia and for Northeast Asia are mutually exclusive. Minor contingencies, peace operations, and humanitarian assistance missions are a reality in the modern world, but forces for these operations will come from those provided for the two MRCs. The capability for a general reserve remains until the National Guard divisions are eliminated.

There are some differences of opinion on the land combat power needed for each MRC. The "magic numbers" established by the BUR are five divisions for each major regional contingency. BUR purists, therefore, hold that the active Army of ten divisions is sufficient. The BUR also said, however, that 15 E-Brigades would be used as a hedge against needing more than five divisions for a single MRC. The need for more than five divisions per MRC is supported by the Army and the combatant commanders, whose real plans call for as many as seven Army divisions or division equivalents for each MRC. The availability of the extra combat power is a useful hedge against the possibility that we cannot win our last, best war--Desert Storm--all over again.

The first task, therefore, is to allocate active Army combat elements between the two MRCs. Figure 1 shows the active component's combat force structure aligned by corps and allocated to the two MRCs.

Southwest Asia MRC	Northeast Asia MRC
<div>XVIII Airborne Corps (US) 82d Airborne Division 101st Air Assault Division 3d Mechanized Division 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment</div> <div>V Corps (Europe) 1st Armored Division 1st Mechanized Division</div>	<div>I Corps (Mixed) 2d Infantry Division (Korea) 25th Light Infantry Division (Hawaii)</div> <div>III Corps (US) 1st Cavalry Division (Armored) 4th Mechanized Division 10th Mountain Division (Light) 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment</div>

Figure 1. Active Army Combat Elements by Corps and MRC

This appears to be a reasonable allocation.[3] The force package for Southwest Asia is the same as was used for the Persian Gulf War except that V Corps is being brought from Germany instead of VII Corps, and the total number of divisions deployed will be five instead of seven. The Korea force package also makes sense, using the division stationed in Korea and the 25th Division in Hawaii, with III Corps to provide some heavy capability. The 10th Mountain Division can pick up its brigade stationed in Alaska en route to Korea. This allocation provides nine heavy and seven light brigades for the Southwest Asia force (the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment is a light formation) and seven heavy and nine light brigades for the Korea force.[4] These austere active component forces provide the basis for assigning missions to all of the National Guard enhanced brigades and some of the divisions.

Augmented Southwest Asia Force

E-Brigades can support the Southwest Asia MRC by augmenting and balancing the two corps and providing additional combat capability to the theater commander. National Guard divisions can support the Southwest Asia MRC by backfilling locations vacated by the divisions deploying from Europe. The composition of the augmented Southwest Asia MRC force is shown in Figure 2, with National Guard E-Brigades and divisions in italics.

XVIII Corps 82d Airborne Division 101st Air Assault Division 3d Mechanized Division <i>48th Mechanized Brigade</i> <i>256th Mechanized Brigade</i> <i>155th Armored Brigade</i> 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment	V Corps (Europe) 1st Armored Division 1st Mechanized Division <i>53d Light Infantry Brigade</i> <i>76th Light Infantry Brigade</i> <i>278th Armored Cavalry Regiment</i>
CENTCOM Forces <i>27th Light Infantry Brigade</i> <i>39th Light Infantry Brigade</i> <i>30th Mechanized Brigade</i>	Europe Backfill Force (Southwest Asia MRC) <i>49th Armored Division</i> <i>35th Mechanized Division</i>

Figure 2. Augmented Southwest Asia MRC Force
(National Guard E-Brigades and Divisions Shown in Italics)

Augmenting and Balancing Corps

The environment and likely circumstances of an MRC in Southwest Asia favor the use of heavy forces. E-Brigades can be used to balance the composition of each of the two corps planned for this theater. Light brigades can be assigned to the heavy corps from Europe, and heavy brigades to the lighter corps from the United States. The mix of combat brigades of the two corps before and after augmentation is shown in Figure 3.

	XVIII Corps	V Corps	Total
Active Component Only			
Light Brigades	7	0	7
Heavy Brigades	3	6	9
Total	10	6	16
With Reserve Component Augmentation			
Light Brigades	7	2	9
Heavy Brigades	6	7	13
Total	13	9	22

Figure 3. Mix of Brigades in the Southwest Asia Force Corps

XVIII Airborne Corps is assigned three heavy E-Brigades to bring the mix of brigades in that corps to six heavy and seven light. These heavy brigades could be placed under the operational control of the light divisions to increase their capability for anti-armor warfare. Or, they may be used under corps control to accomplish missions not requiring an entire division, such as a secondary attack or screening an open flank, which was the mission of the French light armored division in Desert Storm.

V Corps is assigned two light E-Brigades to bring the mix of brigades to seven heavy and two light. The light brigades can be used to beef up the dismounted infantry content of the heavy divisions, or they can be used on independent operations involving corps area security, position defense, or airmobile operations. (The Marine Corps used a reserve infantry regiment during Desert Storm to provide security for its base at Al Jubayl.) The National Guard armored cavalry regiment (heavy) provides this corps the compatible reconnaissance and flank protection it needs to operate effectively.

The reserve component augmentation of six additional brigades for the two corps of the Southwest Asia MRC force

provides a 37 percent increase in combat power. The balance of combat power in each corps is improved. Each corps commander has increased flexibility and additional combat power with which to respond to unexpected events and reinforce success, and the overall combat power of the two corps is increased by two division equivalents.

Providing Combat Capability for the Theater Commander

E-Brigades can also provide additional combat forces for the theater commander to accomplish theater missions without taking combat forces from the two corps or the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). These theater-level missions could include a theater reserve, theater area security, and support for other services or coalition forces.

The CENTCOM commander might use one or more E-brigades as a theater reserve to be committed either to reinforce success or retrieve failure. In Desert Storm, the theater reserve just before the ground attack was the 1st Cavalry Division, which was released to Army Central Command too late to allow it to be of much help in the envelopment of the Republican Guard. A brigade of the 82d Airborne Division also was used as a theater reserve. Having one or more E-Brigades available as a theater reserve would preserve the integrity of the corps but still allow the theater commander to provide additional combat power to the corps as needed to affect the outcome of the battle.

Another theater mission would be to augment Marine divisions or coalition forces. Marine divisions are light formations which, when facing armored forces, could make good use of the tank and mechanized infantry battalions in a heavy E-Brigade. The value of this was demonstrated by the use of the Tiger Brigade to support the 2d Marine Division in Operation Desert Shield. At least one E-Brigade should be designated and trained to provide support for a MEF in sustained land combat.

Similarly, one or more E-Brigades could be used to augment coalition forces. A heavy brigade could be used to provide additional shock power for an infantry-heavy force. A light brigade could provide infantry to augment an allied contingent requiring additional combat power to accomplish its mission.

Another useful theater mission for E-Brigades is rear area and airfield security. E-Brigades assigned to the two corps can provide adequate capability for security in the corps rear areas. However, security is also needed for the ports, airfields, and major logistical installations located behind the corps rear boundaries. Using brigades from the two corps or the MEF to provide theater area security would diminish the combat power available for the main battle. It makes more sense to designate E-brigades for this mission. E-Brigades designated for the rear area security mission could be deployed 30 to 45 days after mobilization and conclude their combat training in the theater while performing their rear area security missions.

Backfilling Europe

One of the corps fighting in this contingency will have vacated posts in Germany. If maintaining a major presence in NATO is deemed important, it would be prudent to provide for backfilling the divisions and some other units of this corps. Backfilling of Europe could be accomplished by two Army National Guard divisions designated and trained in advance for this mission. These divisions could deploy to Europe in less than a month--as rapidly as permitted by strategic airlift and sealift availability--and perform their post-mobilization training in Germany.

Effect of National Guard E-Brigades and Divisions in Southwest Asia

Assignment of nine E-Brigades and two divisions to the Southwest Asia force protects the main combat force of five active divisions from diversions for secondary missions, such as security and support for the Marines and coalition forces. If the battle does not go according to our plans, additional combat power equivalent to two divisions would be available to augment the active divisions or undertake independent operations, such as securing a flank, defending key terrain, making a counterattack, or spearheading a pursuit. The immediate availability of two additional National Guard divisions to backfill in Europe makes it easier to withdraw V Corps for duty in Southwest Asia without disrupting NATO. The additional combat power provided by the E-Brigades is a useful hedge against the risk that BUR estimates of combat power needed for decisive victory in Southwest Asia are too optimistic.

Augmented Northeast Asia Force

E-Brigades can augment and balance the active divisions in the Northeast Asia MRC force and provide additional forces to augment the Marine Corps or the Republic of Korea forces, or to provide security in Korea or elsewhere in the theater.

The operational environment in the Northeast Asia MRC favors the use of balanced corps. Infantry will be useful in many sectors, but heavy forces will also have utility. Figure 4 shows the proposed organization of the augmented Northeast Asia force.

Figure 4. Augmented Northeast Asia Force

Augmenting and Balancing Corps

The addition of five E-Brigades improves the combat power and balance of each of the two corps. The heavy III Corps is provided two light infantry brigades to support independent missions or to provide additional infantry for the two heavy divisions of the corps. One armored brigade is available to provide shock power and extra anti-armor capability for the 10th Mountain Division. Two heavy brigades can provide armor and additional anti-armor capability for the two light divisions of I Corps. Some of these brigades may also be used to provide security in the corps rear areas. The combat power of the two corps is increased by one and two-thirds division equivalents.

A Marine Expeditionary Force employed in the Northeast Asia MRC might not require Army augmentation, but if this becomes necessary during the course of the operation, one of the heavy E-brigades assigned to a corps could be used for that mission. Figure 5 shows how augmentation affects the balance and amount of combat power of the two corps.

	I Corps	III Corps	Total
Active Component Only			
Light Brigades	6	3	9
Heavy Brigades	0	7	7
Total	6	10	16
With Reserve Component Augmentation			
Light Brigades	6	5	11
Heavy Brigades	2	8	10
Total	8	13	21

Figure 5. Mix of Brigades in the Northeast Asia Force Corps

Major responsibility for the defense of Korea against attack from the North rests with the Republic of Korea (ROK)

armed forces. These forces are generally in good condition, well disciplined, well trained, and determined to defend their nation against aggression. The Korean forces, however, are not equipped with the most modern weapons, and it might be useful during the course of the campaign to provide heavy brigades to augment the ROK forces. One or more of the heavy E-Brigades could be used for this purpose.

Providing Additional Combat Capability to the Theater Commander

The use of one E-Brigade as a theater reserve allows the Pacific theater commander (CINCPAC) to accomplish the overall theater mission without drawing combat forces from the main battle in Korea. Most of the Marine Corps forces presently available to CINCPAC in peacetime will be committed to the MEF used in the Northeast Asia MRC. The one E-Brigade will give CINCPAC a limited capability during the MRC to deal with minor contingencies, continue important peace operations and humanitarian assistance, provide security, and maintain forward presence as necessary.

Security within Korea itself will be the responsibility of the ROK armed forces. However, it may be necessary for CINCPAC to provide for security against subversion and terrorist attack of US bases elsewhere in the Pacific region. The availability of a light E-brigade for this purpose would allow CINCPAC to deal with these needs without taking combat forces away from the two corps.

Effect of E-Brigades in Northeast Asia

The assignment of six E-Brigades to the Northeast Asia MRC force allows CINCPAC and the commanders in Korea to proceed with a high degree of assurance that all of the five active component divisions dedicated to that operation can function without being diverted to secondary missions. The E-brigades provide another two divisions' worth of combat power that can be applied to a broad range of missions, from augmenting a division directly to undertaking an independent combat or security operation. The additional combat power of the E-Brigades reduces the risk that the BUR estimates are too low.

General Reserve Force

The National Military Strategy envisions that the United States might have to fight two near-simultaneous MRCs. If this happens, all of the active Army's combat power will be committed in one or the other MRC. There will be no more active combat power available to carry out minor contingencies, peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and operations in aid of civil authorities, or to provide a hedge against the unexpected. In that case the entire available land combat capability of the United States will consist of eight divisions and two separate brigades of the Army National Guard. These combat formations can be task organized into a General Reserve Force as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6. General Reserve Force

Minor Contingency Operations

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States has engaged in several missions other than MRCs. Many of these operations are small and involve few forces, but some of them are minor contingencies using as much as a division's

worth of combat power. Operations in Panama, Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia have all involved a division or more plus support units. The reserve components are heavily involved in smaller peace operations and humanitarian assistance missions, but the minor contingencies all have been carried out by active combat forces. It is likely that similar operations will be encountered in the future, and it is possible that the Army will be engaged on one of these minor contingencies when one or both MRCs occur. If so, it will be necessary to stop the minor contingency, disengage the active combat formations, and redeploy them to the MRC. This may also present the dilemma of either slowing down deployment to the MRC or else using forces intended for one MRC for the other (which can be done but entails costs in efficiency and effectiveness).

A National Guard division, such as the 29th Light Infantry Division, could be designated and trained for the roles of minor contingencies and operations in support of civil authorities and gain experience by participating in these operations in peacetime. It would then be possible to continue ongoing minor contingencies by using a National Guard division to relieve the active division in place. This would facilitate withdrawal and redeployment of the active forces to an MRC, and it would keep the minor contingency going without compromising mission accomplishment. In the event of two simultaneous MRCs, the designated division could relieve all active combat forces engaged in minor contingencies and peacetime operations.

SOUTHCOM Reserve Force

The US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) has no combat forces assigned or earmarked. There is a threat of unrest and subversion in this region that might require the use of combat forces during an MRC to secure key facilities, such as the Panama Canal, or to support friendly forces. If the United States were to be involved in two MRCs at the same time, a conspicuous lack of US combat forces to operate in Latin America might tempt aggressors there to take action. For example, the 92d Light Infantry Brigade and selected support units could be designated as the SOUTHCOM reserve force.

General Reserve Corps

It has been the military policy of the United States to maintain a general reserve that provides the Commander-in-Chief additional combat power for use in unexpected situations. In the past, when there was time to get ready, the National Guard and Army Reserve were the general reserve in the sense that they were an organized body of troops available to be mobilized and made ready to provide additional combat power if that were necessary. The modern world, however, allows no time for leisurely mobilization.

It is prudent to provide the President a general reserve over and above the forces already allocated to the MRCs. This general reserve is a hedge against the possibility that military operations in an MRC do not go well or that another, unexpected contingency occurs. This general reserve capability can be provided by forming a fifth corps consisting entirely of National Guard divisions and a separate brigade, as shown in Figure 6. The General Reserve Corps would be commanded by an active lieutenant general supported by a joint and integrated active and reserve component corps headquarters, a corps support command, and the other brigade- or group-level combat support organizations normally allocated to a corps.

The General Reserve Corps would be available to assist in the mobilization and deployment of active and reserve component units responding to an MRC. General Reserve Corps units would go on active duty at the outset of an MRC. After performing their deployment support missions, they would be released from active duty if no other mission arises. The General Reserve Corps could provide organized units for port support activities and home station assistance for loading out active and reserve component units in the MRC forces. They could perform the opposing force mission at the National Training Center and other training areas. They could provide personnel and resources to facilitate and expedite mobilization and training of the E-Brigades.[5]

The General Reserve Corps could also provide combat and support organizations or units to reinforce if necessary the Southwest Asia MRC force or the Northeast Asia MRC force. Combat battalions could be ready in 30 days after mobilization, one brigade of each division in 90 days, and entire divisions within a year, depending on the urgency of the situation. The entire corps could deploy as a corps in about one year after it was mobilized.

The divisions of the General Reserve Corps could be particularly useful in providing trained, equipped, and effective combat battalions as unit replacements for active Army battalions that become ineffective in the course of combat. Entire battalions or parts of battalions could be deployed within 30 days to assist in reconstituting units that have suffered severe losses. Reconstituting combat units with individual replacements takes time that may not be available if the number of combat battalions is small, so a capability for rapid unit replacement could be valuable.

Once the active divisions and E-Brigades are deployed, the General Reserve Corps would constitute the entire Army National Guard capability for supporting civil authorities in emergencies in the United States.

Additional Requirements for Combat Organizations

Although all of the existing National Guard combat brigades and divisions have been assigned missions in the analysis to this point, there are additional requirements for combat organizations which are not met by the current Army force structure.

School Troops. The Army has provided two to four active and reserve component separate school troop brigades for the past 40 years. This capability is not now provided by either active or reserve component organizations. If the mission is still required, it could be accomplished by an active unit or in wartime by some of the training units in the Army Reserve.

Armored Cavalry Regiments. The Army historically has provided each corps commander an armored cavalry regiment (ACR) to serve as a scouting and screening force under corps control. The current structure provides only three armored cavalry regiments (one of them light) for four corps. Two additional ACRs are needed to provide a cavalry capability for one of the existing active Army corps and for the proposed General Reserve Corps. Alternatively, some of the heavy E-Brigades could be trained and equipped for this traditional cavalry role.

Peace Operations and Humanitarian Assistance. One light infantry division is likely to be insufficient to provide augmentation and backfill support for peace operations and minor contingencies in the event of an MRC. It would be better to have two division equivalents earmarked and available for this mission because of the possible need to rotate National Guard and Reserve units in a long-term operation.

Conclusions

The foregoing proposals assign reasonable and credible missions within the framework of the National Security Strategy to all of the Army National Guard's 15 Enhanced Brigades, two other separate brigades, and eight divisions. Those combat organizations are used to augment the active divisions of four Army corps, fulfill missions other than the two MRCs, continue forward deployment in Europe, and provide a fifth corps as a hedge against the unexpected.

The credibility of these proposed missions for Army National Guard combat organizations should be judged on the extent to which each mission is likely enough or serious enough to warrant designation of forces. These proposed missions should not be judged on the alleged unreadiness or inability of National Guard combat organizations to perform. If the missions are valid, the troops should be designated, prepared, and trained to perform them.

Another factor that favors the assignment of the National Guard's E-Brigades to MRC missions and the retention of its divisions as a general reserve is that the Army has to degrade the readiness of one division to deploy another division. The act of bringing understrength and underequipped active divisions to full strength for military operations requires cross-leveling personnel, equipment, and even entire units from non-deploying divisions. For Desert Storm, the deployment of VII Corps from Germany to Southwest Asia reduced V Corps to an unready state. Forces deployed from the United States for Desert Storm were filled by personnel and equipment from divisions that were in the process of being inactivated when the war started. This source of unallocated resources may not be available next time. Deploying the 1st Armored Division to Bosnia severely reduced the readiness of the forces remaining in Germany. The adverse effects of filling units to deploy by taking from other units are temporary, but they are real because they are caused by a general insufficiency of resources for the force structure.

There is grave doubt that an Army of ten divisions and a strength of less than 500,000 personnel can simultaneously

deploy five full-strength, ready divisions to Southwest Asia and another five to Northeast Asia. If half of the Army is needed to support the other half in a single MRC, it would be foolish to eliminate the only other combat forces that could be ready to help out--Army National Guard divisions and brigades.

The MRC-related missions are validated by the Bottom-Up Review, but the force levels to achieve victory range from the "official" estimate of five divisions to seven-plus divisions each. As anticipated by the BUR, the E-Brigades provide additional forces to cover the risk of insufficient combat power.

The most controversial of the missions proposed here is the provision of a general or strategic reserve. The BUR established a general but vague requirement for 37 National Guard brigades, of which 15 were to be enhanced for use in the MRCs and 22 were to constitute a general reserve. The Guard can provide 16 combat brigades for the General Reserve Corps and ten more combat brigades to provide protection against unforeseen and calamitous events.

The cost of retaining five National Guard divisions as a general reserve has to be compared to the alternatives. If circumstances are such that the general reserve is not needed, some funds will have been spent on combat power that was not needed. Of course, this comment applies to the entire defense budget from 1974 to 1989, when we maintained for a major war in Europe massive conventional combat power that was not used. For the Cold War, we justified potential combat power for its deterrent effect as well as for actual combat; the principle remains valid when applied to the National Guard divisions. If we do away with the capability for a general reserve over and above the two MRCs, we lose our general deterrent against action by potential adversaries and rogue nations during a period of great vulnerability.

If we eliminate the General Reserve and find that we need one, no amount of money will build one quickly. The Army says that it will take a full year for an existing National Guard division to be ready for combat. That division today is equipped, manned with experienced officers and enlisted personnel (many of whom have substantial active duty service), and has undergone 40 days of unit training each year for several years. How much longer would it take the Army to form a new division from scratch: procuring a new set of equipment; taking from other divisions a cadre of 4000 commissioned and noncommissioned officers; and enlisting 12,000 new volunteers, putting them through basic combat training and skill training at the entry level, and training them collectively until they can operate effectively as battalions, brigades, and an entire division? If the Army National Guard divisions are eliminated or converted to truck companies or engineer battalions, it will take two or more years to get that combat power back after the need is perceived. Are the citizens of this country willing to take that chance?

NOTES

1. The current fad is to count cavalry regiments as combat brigades, even though the roles of the two organizations, and hence their structure and equipment, are different.
2. This is not the place to debate the adequacy of the NATO land forces, but it is hard to find even an optimistic scenario of a full-scale NATO-Warsaw Pact war in Europe that did not end in a nuclear exchange. We were getting close to achieving a major conventional option when the Cold War ended--fortunately without verifying whether our Cold War Army was big enough or not.
3. This allocation may or may not be the same as that planned by the Army, but the mix and number of active brigades available offer only a limited number of ways to be divided into two equal parts.
4. It is interesting to note that the active Army combat forces are exactly half light infantry (Fort Benning) and half mounted troops (Fort Knox). Is this coincidence or compromise?
5. These requirements have not been established merely to justify the constitution of a general reserve force. Deployments routinely demonstrate, for example, that a force roughly equivalent in size to the deploying force is required to support outprocessing, personnel and equipment fill-up, and housekeeping following deployment. Training support missions must be continued during and after deployment, and the E-Brigades can be expected to ask for substantial support in attaining readiness standards within 90 days.

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Reviewed 21 August 1996. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil.